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CAA honors King with documentary

By Karen Henson and Joe Bustillos
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Twenty years ago, the question was raised: "How long will prejudice blind the vision of men?" Then, the voice was silenced.

In remembrance of this period, the Coalition Against Apartheid showed the film "King: Montgomery to Memphis" on Wednesday.

Colin Caldwell, president of CAA, said it's easy to point fingers at human rights violations around the world and not remember those in the United States.

The film, which was shown in the University Center, chronicles the civil rights movement from the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 to the death of

Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968.

Caldwell said it's easy to distance oneself from human rights violations with statistics. However, the film's depiction of firehoses and German Shepherds used to disperse the civil rights demonstrators made it personal, he said.

Biology major Wendy Loeffler said it was hard to watch the abuse the demonstrators suffered.

Caldwell said because of growing racial tension — reflected in the murder of Yusef Hawkins in New York — conditions in America potentially could become as bad as they are in South Africa.

The four conditions that King and the civil rights movement — the desegregation of all stores, an equal opportunity for minorities in employment, the

exoneration of all charged, but non-violent demonstrators and the creation of a bi-racial committee that would establish a timetable to resolve additional inequalities — have not been achieved in South Africa.

In addition, the film showed the strength of the movement by using an aerial view of the crowd as it encompassed the entire Washington Monument in anticipation of King's address in 1963.

King spoke of the Emancipation Proclamation which ended captivity for blacks. Yet, 100 years later, he said, blacks still are not free.

The coalition members said freedom has not been reached for blacks in South Africa, and many violations of human rights are on an upward swing in America.

The passage of a law in Irvine on Tuesday legalizing the right to discriminate against homosexuals is an example of the erosion of basic freedoms, Caldwell said.

King said, "Somewhere I read of freedom of assembly, somewhere I read of a right to protest for basic freedoms." However, in America and South Africa, blacks and other minorities are in a daily struggle for freedom.

Toward the end of the film, King's last speech was played at his funeral. He spoke about what he wanted someone to say about him after his death.

"Don't mention all the awards I have received ... I want to be remembered as a man that tried to love somebody," King said.

The film ended with a song that asked what will happen now that the king of love is dead.